

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 AF-06 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1066

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 17697

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, FT, FR

SUBJECT: QUAI REFLECTIONS ON TFAI

REF: PARIS 13672 (NOTAL)

1. IN CONVERSATION JULY 7, QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR AFRICA COMBAL MADE OBEISANCE TO "UNCHANGED" OFFICIAL POLICY TOWARDS THE TFAI, I.E., FRANCE WILL FOLLOW THE "POPULAR WILL" IN DETERMINING THE FUTURE STATUS OF THE TERRITORY, AND THEN PROCEEDED TO DISCUSS CURRENT CONDITIONS WHICH HAVE THE POTENTIAL FOR MARKEDLY ALTERING FRENCH POLICY THERE.

2. COMBAL NOTED THAT THE DJIBOUTI GOVERNMENT, AT ITS OWN INITIATIVE, HAD RECENTLY SENT MISSIONS TO A NUMBER OF AFRICAN AND ARAB COUNTRIES. THE PURPOSE OF THESE MISSIONS WAS TO EXPLAIN WHY ALI AREF'S GOVERNMENT, CONFIDENTIAL

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WHILE DESIRING EVENTUAL TFAI INDEPENDENCE, DOES NOT

WISH TO PRESS THE ISSUE NOW. COMBAL SAID THAT EVEN THE MOST CONSERVATIVE AFRICAN-ARAB LEADERS TOLD THE MISSIONS THAT THEY COULD NOT, GIVEN OAU AND ARAB LEAGUE POLICIES, SUPPORT ANYTHING LESS THAN IMMEDIATE INDEPENDENCE FOR THE TERRITORY. HE IMPLIED THAT ALI AREF'S FOLLOWERS, SOMEWHAT TAKEN ABACK BY THIS RESPONSE, HAVE BEGUN SERIOUSLY TO REEXAMINE THEIR OWN POSITIONS. THE FACT THAT THE MODERATE FRENCH PRESS, TOO, IS NOW CALLING FOR EARLY INDEPENDENCE WILL ALSO AFFECT OPINION IN DJIBOUTI AND IN THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT, COMBAL ADDED.

3. BEFORE ANY CHANGE OF STATUS CAN BE MADE, COMBAL CONTINUED, THE PEOPLE OF THE TFAI MUST AGREE BOTH THAT THEY WANT INDEPENDENCE AND ON AN ACCEPTABLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT. ALI AREF IS DEFINITELY PERSONNA NON GRATA TO THE ISSAS. SHOULD THE INHABITANTS, AS NOW SEEMS UNLIKELY, SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS, THE NEXT QUESTION WOULD BE ETHIOPIAN AND SOMALI ACQUIESCENCE IN AN INDEPENDENT TFAI.

4. COMBAL THOUGHT THAT THE ONLY POSSIBILITY OF SUCH ACCEPTANCE (AND HE WAS HIGHLY DUBIOUS THAT SOMALIA WOULD EVER REALLY ACCEPT ANY SOLUTION OTHER THAN THE INCORPORATION OF THE TFAI) WAS IN A LARGER FRAMEWORK. HE OBSERVED THAT NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, INCLUDING SAUDI ARABIA, EGYPT AND EVEN THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN, WANT STABILITY IN THE AREA AND MIGHT BE ABLE USEFULLY TO EXERT PRESSURE ON THE PARTIES. FURTHER AFIELD, BOTH THE OAU AND THE ARAB LEAGUE MIGHT BE ABLE TO PLAY A HELPFUL ROLE, HE SPECULATED.

5. CURRENTLY BESET BY COMORIAN INDEPENDENCE PROBLEMS, COMBAL DESCRIBED THEM AS NOTHING COMPARED WITH DJIBOUTI, THE FUTURE STABILITY OF WHICH IS OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO WESTERN INTERESTS IN THE HORN AND THE MIDDLE EAST. IT IS BECAUSE OF THIS STRATEGIC INTEREST THAT FRANCE HOPES SOMEHOW TO MAINTAIN A BASE AT DJIBOUTI.

6. ON A MORE HOPEFUL NOTE, COMBAL DOUBTED THAT A
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CHANGE IN THE STATUS QUO IS IMMINENT. HE BELIEVED THAT THE QUESTION OF TFAI INDEPENDENCE WOULD NOT BE PRESSED AT THIS YEAR'S UNGA. HOWEVER, HE CONCLUDED, TIME IS RUNNING OUT TO SOLVE THIS INTRACTABLE PROBLEM.

7. COMMENT: THE RETHINKING ON THE TFAI DESCRIBED IN THE REFERENCE IS PICKING UP SPEED.
RUSH

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NNN

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